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# Acorn Pocket Book A-Link Guide

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## Introduction

The Pocket Book filing system allows files to be uploaded and downloaded transparently to and from the Acorn Pocket Book.

The software is also able to convert several types of RISC OS files so that they can be used in Pocket Book applications, and vice versa.

This software requires RISC OS 3 (version 3.1) and above.

## Packing list

The kit should contain the following items:

- A floppy disc containing the PocketFS application software
- A Pocket Book A-link cable
- *Acorn Pocket Book A-Link Guide* (this document).

If any of these items is missing or damaged, please contact your supplier immediately.

## Installation

The installation process consists of the following steps:

- updating the !System directory
- making a copy of the application
- setting up the Acorn Pocket Book.

## Updating the !System directory using SysMerge

SysMerge is a utility for maintaining and combining !System directories. When new modules are released or !System is modified to provide new or enhanced facilities, you use the SysMerge utility to manage the process of updating !System directories.

- 1 Select one !System to be your master !System. (If you are a new user of RISC OS computers, this is the !System supplied on disc App 1, or if you have a hard disc system, it is in the root directory of your hard disc.) All modifications should be made to this !System or a copy of it.
- 2 If necessary, copy this master !System to a disc with plenty of free space. You may wish to copy it to a newly-formatted disc which will become your master system disc. (If so, give the disc a recognisable name, for example SYSTEM, using **Name disc** from the disc icon bar menu.)
- 3 Start the SysMerge application by double clicking on it. The dialogue box shown here will appear:

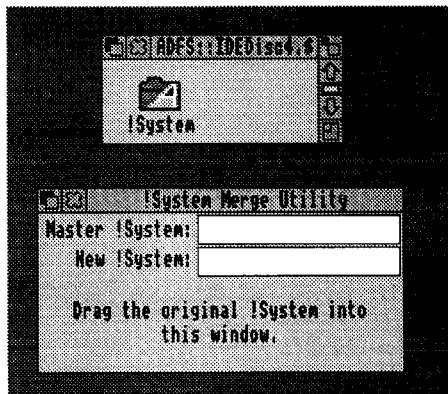


Figure 1 SysMerge dialogue box

- 4 Drag the master !System directory into the SysMerge dialogue box. The pathname in the box labelled Master !System changes to the pathname of your master !System.

- 5 Drag the !System to be merged (the !System on the Pocket Book disc) into the SysMerge dialogue box.

The Pocket Book disc !System's pathname will be displayed in the box labelled New !System. (If you use a purely floppy-based system you may have to change discs during this process.)

If all is well, the !Systems will be merged, and the message "!"System Updated" will appear.

If a problem occurs, an error message is displayed. SysMerge will report "Update failed". Take the appropriate action to resolve the problem, and then restart the merge process.

The most common error message you may see is "disc full"; this will not occur if you are merging onto a new system disc. If you have additional files on the master !System disc you should move them elsewhere.

When SysMerge is finished, you can quit the application, by selecting the **Close** icon on the window or by using the **Quit** menu option. Click Menu over the !SysMerge window to display the !SysMerge menu.

Repeat this process for all the !Systems on all your discs until you have a single master !System. This new master !System can then be used for all your work.

It is a good idea to make a backup copy of your new master !System disc, and to store this safely.

When you modify your master !System in the future, remember to take a new copy of it, and to change the copy. Do not delete older !Systems just in case something goes wrong.

## Copy options

If you do not know what Copy options are, you can skip this section as the default setup is correct.

If you have changed your computer's default settings, you should select **Options** from the **Filer** menu, and switch off the **Newer** flag. This ensures that files are saved correctly on the Pocket Book.

### **Making a copy of the application**

You should take a copy of the disc supplied to work with during normal use; keep the original (with its write-protect set) as a backup. If you do this, then you can still re-install it from your original, even if you accidentally delete the application on your copy.

The application can be run from a hard disc, floppy disc or network file server.

To copy the application, drag the PocketFS icon to the required directory display.

### **Setting up the Acorn Pocket Book**

You will need to use the Pocket Book A-link cable supplied. This consists of a 9-pin serial cable which connects to the RISC OS computer, and an interface with a 6-pin connector which fits into the Pocket Book. If you have a BBC A3000, you will need to purchase the serial port upgrade from your Acorn supplier.

Before connecting the RISC OS computer to the Pocket Book, make sure that both of the machines are switched off.

You should always switch off the Pocket Book before connecting it to or disconnecting it from the link. However there is no need to switch off the RISC OS computer unless connecting or disconnecting the serial link at that end of the cable.

Plug one end of the 9-pin serial cable into the D-shaped serial port on the RISC OS computer. Insert the other end into the Pocket Book interface.

Connect the interface to the Pocket Book with the 6-pin connector on the lefthand side of the machine.

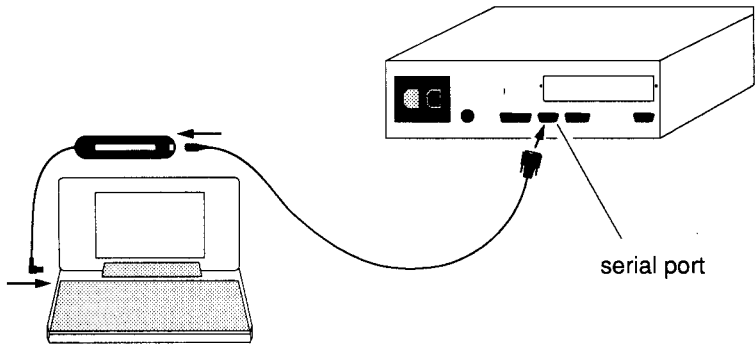


Figure 2 Setting up the Pocket Book

When the interface has been connected, turn the remote link option on the Pocket Book on. This is achieved from the Desktop display. Press the Menu key, and use the left and right cursor keys to view the **Special** menu.

On **Special** menu, there is an option called **Remote Link**. Select this option, and make sure that the remote link is switched on, and that the baud rate is set to 9600. If this is not the case, use the cursor keys to alter the values displayed until they are correctly set. When the options are set correctly, press Enter.

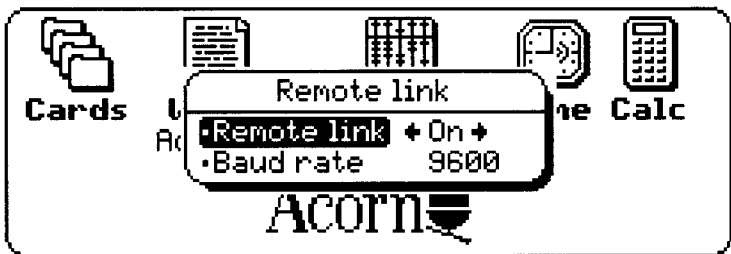


Figure 3 Remote Link menu

If you open one or other of the Solid State Disk drive doors, the Link cannot communicate until you close it again.

## Powering the link

The link only uses power from the Pocket Book when it is in use. If you are using battery power, using the link will reduce the battery life to some degree.

The link may turn off suddenly if you use the link when the battery power is too low.

## Starting the program



Double click on the PocketFS icon to load the program. The PocketFS icon should now be on the icon bar.



If there is a large red question mark over the icon, this means either that the Pocket Book is not properly connected to the RISC OS computer, or that the Pocket Book is switched off. A red question mark is also displayed if the Pocket Book has switched itself off to save power when not in use.

First make sure the Pocket Book is switched on, and then check that the **Remote Link** option on the Pocket Book is turned on as described in *Setting up the Acorn Pocket Book*. If this fails to remove the question mark, then check that all the cables are firmly connected. If the question mark still remains after you have checked all this, contact your supplier.

## The conversion window

Clicking on the PocketFS icon displays a window which is similar in appearance to the Desktop display on the Pocket Book. The conversion window displays the Pocket Book files which it can convert.

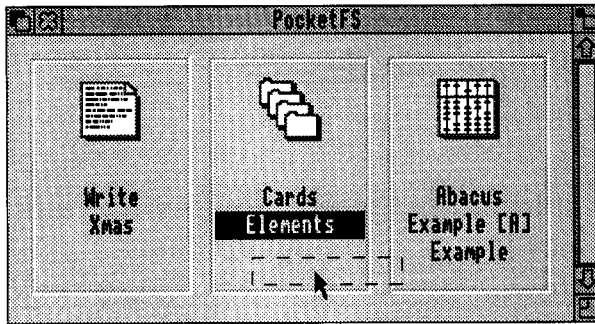


Figure 4 Conversion window

All drives on the Pocket Book are searched for files; those which are not on the internal drive are listed with a drive letter in square brackets after the filename.

All file conversions take place within the conversion window:

- Files dragged from this window to other applications or directory displays are converted to a RISC OS computer format.
- Files dragged from other directory displays or applications onto this window are converted to the relevant Pocket Book format, depending on which column you drag it to.

## Conversions supported

The following conversions between the RISC OS computer and the Pocket Book are supported. All these conversions work both ways (to and from your computer or Pocket Book).

RISC OS format		Pocket Book format
CSV	to/from	Abacus
TSV	to/from	Abacus
WK1	to/from	Abacus
CSV	to/from	Data
TSV	to/from	Data
Text	to/from	Write
RTF	to/from	Write

## Summary of file types

### Text – Plain Text (File Type TEXT/&FFF)

Plain text files do not support style, emphasis or font information, however almost all editors, word processors and DTP applications can load plain text files.

### RTF – Rich Text Format (File Type DOS/&FE4)

Rich Text Format supports style, emphasis and font information. Many word processors and DTP systems (such as Impression) can load or save Rich Text files, however not all computer systems or applications understand the same fonts etc.

### CSV – Comma Separated Variable Format (File Type CSV/&DFE)

CSV files are used mainly by spreadsheets and databases. As the name suggests, CSV files contain variables separated by commas. CSV files do not support equations (equations are evaluated and the result substituted).



### **TSV – Tab Separated Variable Format (File Type TEXT/FFFF)**

TSV format is similar to CSV but tabs instead of commas are used as the field separator, and the file type is ASCII text. TSV files are useful when transferring data between a spreadsheet or database, and a word processor.

### **WK1 – Lotus 1-2-3 WK1 Format (File Type Lotus/DB0)**

A file format supported by Lotus 1-2-3 Spreadsheet (version 2 onwards). WK1 files have an advantage over CSV/TSV in that equations are supported and are not substituted by their result. This means that when a WK1 file is loaded into another spreadsheet program that understands WK1, cells can be changed and the spreadsheet re-evaluated without the need to re-enter equations.

## **Converting a RISC OS file to Pocket Book format**

To convert a RISC OS file to Pocket Book format, simply drag the RISC OS file from a directory display, or an application save box, onto the relevant column in the conversion window.

If the RISC OS file type is one that can be converted to a Pocket Book format, then conversion starts. If this will take some time, an hourglass is displayed showing the percentage completed.

When the file has been converted, the conversion window updates itself to display the file just saved to it. The system display on the Pocket Book also shows this file.

Note that when you convert a large file, the system window on the Pocket Book will display the new file before the conversion process has finished. Do not disconnect the link, or attempt to use the file on the Pocket Book until the conversion window on the RISC OS computer has updated itself. This may take a few seconds.

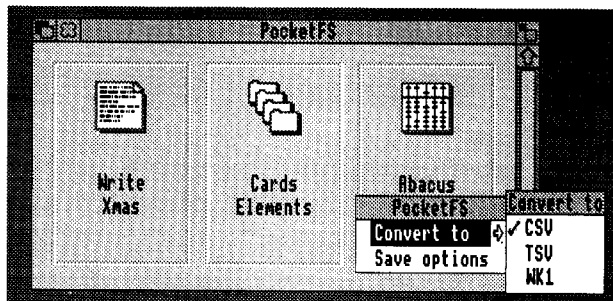


Figure 5 Converting to RISC OS format

## Converting a Pocket Book file to RISC OS format

Pocket Book files can be converted into more than one type of RISC OS computer file. You choose the RISC OS file type by clicking Menu over the column containing the file you want to convert. The menu displayed has two entries.

The first entry is **Convert to**. Note that if you pressed Menu when the pointer was between columns, this entry will be greyed out. Move the mouse to the right to display its sub-menu. This lists the different file types that the Pocket Book file can be converted into. The entry with a tick beside it is the currently-selected file type for the conversion. To select a different file type to convert to, click on the appropriate option.

The second entry, **Save options** instructs the program to remember the current conversion options for each column, so that the next time the program is run they are selected automatically.

Once you have selected the file type for the Pocket Book file conversion, click on the file icon, and drag it to the directory display or application you want to load it into. The Pocket Book file is converted into the chosen format, and saved to the directory display or loaded into the application according to where the file was dragged.

If conversion will take some time, an hourglass is displayed showing the percentage completed.

## Character set mapping

The Acorn Pocket Book uses a character set common to DOS-based computers. The character set flag allows the user to choose between DOS and Latin1 when files are translated.

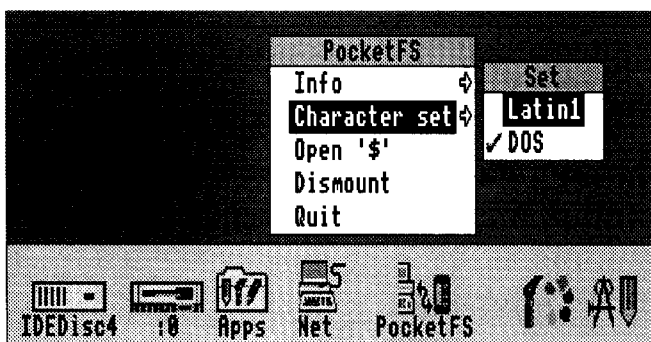


Figure 6 The character set

- If Latin1 is chosen, then the translator attempts to substitute the corresponding Latin1 character when files are moved from the Pocket Book to the RISC OS computer. This option usually gives the best results.
- If DOS is chosen, then the character code is preserved. However the resulting characters do not look the same on both machines.

## Example

The figures given in brackets are the character code in hexadecimal.

Character set flag	Character on Pocket Book	Direction of transfer	Character on RISC OS computer
Latin1	® (169/&A9)	→	® (174/&AE)
Latin1	® (169/&A9)	←	® (174/&AE)
DOS	® (169/&A9)	→	© (169/&A9)
DOS	« (174/&AE)	←	® (174/&AE)

Characters which do not exist on the destination machine when Latin1 is selected are replaced by the corresponding DOS character.

## The directory display

You can open a standard RISC OS directory display of the files on the Pocket Book. You do this by clicking Menu on the icon bar icon, and choosing the **Open '\$'** option, or by clicking on the icon bar icon with Adjust.

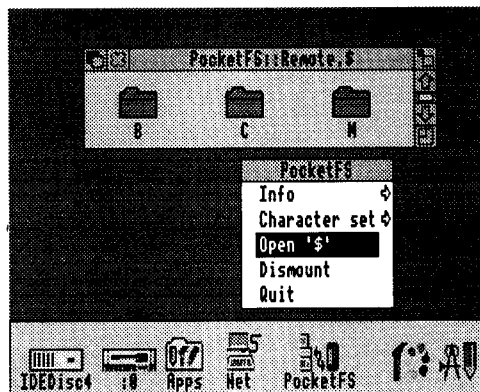


Figure 7 The directory display

The Filer displays the directory PocketFS::Remote.\$\$. The directories in the display correspond to devices on the Pocket Book. For example, directory M is the internal drive; A and B, if present, are Solid State Disks. Drive C is the remote link which also contains software used by the link.

Files and directories can be copied, renamed, deleted etc., as in any other directory display; exceptions are directories A, B, C and M in the root directory. No conversion takes place when copying files to the RISC OS computer and vice versa. In order to convert files you need to use the conversion window as explained above.

You cannot save files in the root directory, as this would correspond to adding another device to the Pocket Book.

Note that directory C, and some Solid State Disks, are read only; you therefore cannot save files in them.

The Pocket Book uses a filing system different from that used by RISC OS computers, and so filenames that are valid on one computer are not necessarily valid on another. For example, Text .wrd is not a valid filename on a RISC OS computer.

This means that filenames and filename extensions have to be translated when a file is copied between a Pocket Book and a RISC OS computer. You should note that translation difficulties may arise when two files are created with similar names on the Pocket book.

Examples:

Text.d\$c appears as Text

Text.ndx appears as Text001

File names with 'top-bit-set' characters (such as 'hard space', À, ®, etc) should be avoided as the corresponding character may not exist on both the Pocket Book and your RISC OS computer. PocketFS will do its best to translate such characters but this can produce unexpected results.

## File access permission

The Pocket Book and RISC OS filing systems treat access permission bits differently. This means you should not try to change the access permission status of a file on the Pocket Book using the RISCOS directory display. Instead this should be done by using the **Set file attributes** submenu on the Pocket Book.

## File time stamps

The Pocket Book and RISC OS filing systems treat file time stamps differently. This means you should not try to time-stamp a file on the Pocket Book using the RISC OS directory display.

In addition if you set \*opt 1 2 (report full information for OS\_File operations) and create a file using **\*create !Temp!** then

```
!temp!      00000000 00000200 00000100
```

is reported instead of

```
!temp!      FFFFDxx xxxxxxxx 00000100
```

where xx xxxxxxxx is normally the time and date stamp.

See also *Copy options* on page 3.

## \*Free not supported

PocketFS does not support the **\*Free** command. If you want to find out how much data is stored on a particular drive on your Pocket Book use the **Count** option on a RISC OS directory display menu.

## Using the Pocket Book while connected to the Link

It is possible to use applications on the Pocket Book while the Pocket Book is connected to the link. However files cannot be opened by both computers at the same time, and an error is generated if you attempt this.

If you create a new file on the Pocket Book either by using an application or the Pocket Book Desktop, an open directory display on the RISC OS computer will be updated to show the new file. This may take a few seconds, and you should not use the file until the open directory display has been updated.

## Closing down Pocket FS

The **Quit** menu option is used to remove the PocketFS application from the icon bar, however you should select **Dismount** before quitting in order to terminate the serial link connection correctly.

## Advanced options

### Displaying other directories in the conversion window

You can change the directories displayed in the conversion window by editing the file `ConfigFile` which resides in the Resources directory inside `!PocketFS`.

Access to the `!PocketFS` directory is gained by Shift-double-clicking on the PocketFS application icon.

The file consists of column definitions. The format of a column definition is:

```
File type  
Number of directories to display  
The directories  
Name of sprite to display at the top of the  
column
```

The file is terminated by a blank line. Lines starting with a semi-colon and blank lines between column definitions are ignored.

So, to add the directory `PocketFS::Remote.$m.WRD.ToDo` to the write column in the conversion window, you alter the number of directories to display from 3 to 4, and add the directory to the list, so that part of the file would look as follows:

```
302
4
PocketFS::Remote.$m.WRD
PocketFS::Remote.$a.WRD
PocketFS::Remote.$b.WRD
PocketFS::Remote.$m.WRD.ToDo !word
```

Note that the order in which you list directories is not important.

### Drive C in the conversion window

Drive C on the Pocket Book is actually software in a ROM contained in the link adaptor cable. You should not (and should never need to) modify the configuration file to put drive C in the directory search path for the conversion window. If you do, you will find that the link software runs very slowly.

### Changing the order of columns

You may wish to change the order in which columns are displayed in the conversion window, for example to group similar columns together, or to have the columns in the same order as they appear on the Pocket Book.

You change the order of columns by editing the file `ConfigFile` which resides in the Resources directory inside `!PocketFS`. The columns are displayed from left to right in the same order in which they appear in `ConfigFile`. Altering the order of the column definitions in this file alters their position in the conversion window.

### Adding translator modules

File conversion by PocketFS is based on a modular system. This allows you to add further translator modules to those provided as standard with PocketFS, and additional columns may be provided in



the conversion window. Such modules may be provided by third party vendors, and you should refer to the documentation provided with them for information on how to install them.

## **Error messages**

### **Access violation**

The file is not user-readable for read operations, or is locked / read-only on write operations.

### **Already opened by another process**

This error occurs when you try to access a file you are currently editing on the Pocket Book. Some tasks on the Pocket Book may prevent the reading of files which they have open (for instance if the task is modifying the file). This error can also result if an attempt is made to access files in use by the system. To access the file, quit the task that is using the file.

### **Cannot create canonical file name mapping**

This error message is usually generated only when the file name mapping process is unable to create a unique name on the destination computer. Try renaming the file and repeating the action that caused the error message.

### **Cannot find an equivalent name on remote device**

The filenames of the Pocket Book can only be up to eight characters in length, whereas they can be longer on other RISC OS filing systems. Rename the file with a name that is less than nine characters in length and try again.

### **Configuration file invalid**

The file `Resources.ConfigFile` is not of a valid format. Re-install this file from the original disc.

### **Date before 1970**

PocketFS does not support pre-1970 dates.

### **Device full**

There is insufficient space on the destination device (disc) to create the file. You will need to delete some of your existing data before you can transfer this file.

### **Device is write protected or read only**

The device is write-protected or read-only.

### **Device not ready / present**

This error is normally generated by a faulty Solid State Disk. If you receive this error then you should check the device is installed and working correctly.

### **Directory full**

The directory is full. You may have up to 100 objects (files or directories) within a directory.

### **Disconnected from remote**

This error can occasionally occur if the link is turned off remotely while a file operation is taking place.

### **Invalid name**

The name contains characters inappropriate to the filing system on the Pocket Book.

### **Not a Data file**

The file you have tried to convert is not a valid Data file.

### **Not a Lotus file**

The file you have tried to convert is not a valid Lotus file.

### **Not an Abacus file**

The file you have tried to convert is not a valid Abacus file.

### **Not a Word file**

The file you have tried to convert is not a valid Word file.

### **Objects cannot be created in the root directory**

You cannot create a file in the root directory, as this would be equivalent to adding another device on the Pocket Book.

### **Operation not supported on PocketFS**

Special fields are not supported on PocketFS.

### **Remote changed, or link restarted**

The Pocket Book has been changed midway through a link operation.

### **Some formulae could not be converted**

This error can occur when you convert Lotus files to Abacus files or vice versa. If you are using a formula specific to Lotus or Abacus, then the formula will not be converted. However, as much as possible of the rest of the spreadsheet will be converted.

### **Unable to convert Lotus file**

The Lotus file is not a valid .WK1 file or is corrupt and cannot be converted.

### **Unable to open configuration file**

The file `Resources.ConfigFile` has been deleted or is not of a valid format. Re-install this file from the original discs.

### **Unable to open options file**

The file `Resources.options` has been deleted or is not of a valid format. Re-install this file from the original discs.

### **Unable to read configuration file**

The file `Resources.ConfigFile` has been deleted or is not of a valid format. Re-install this file from the original discs.

### **Unable to read options file**

The file `Resources.options` is not of a valid format. Re-install this file from the original discs.

### **Unable to write options file**

You do not have write access to the options file. This error can occur when using the program on a floppy-based system when the floppy disc is write protected.

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